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General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

Official Records

68th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 9 December 1997, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Statement by the President

The President: I have just been advised that consultations on the issues that we are going to consider at this plenary meeting are still ongoing and that the delegations involved in those consultations require more time.

The meeting was suspended at 3.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

Agenda item 36 *(continued)*

Question of Palestine

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/52/35)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/581)

Draft resolutions (A/52/L.49-L.51, L.52 and Corr.1, L.53/Rev.1)

Amendment (A/52/L.59)

Letter from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/52/571)

Letter from Namibia (A/52/704)

The President: After consultations with concerned delegations, it has been agreed that the General Assembly will proceed in the following manner. The Assembly will begin with the introduction of draft resolutions A/52/L.49, L.50 and L.51 and take action on these three draft resolutions. Explanations of vote on these three draft resolutions will be heard before and after the action. Next, in a similar manner, the General Assembly will proceed with consideration of and action on draft resolution A/52/L.52. Then the General Assembly will consider draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1 and the amendment thereto contained in document A/52/L.59.

I now give the floor to Mr. George Saliba, Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to introduce draft resolutions A/52/L.49, L.50 and L.51.

Mr. Saliba (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People: On behalf of the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, who is not in New York at present, I have the honour to introduce three draft resolutions under agenda item 36, "Question of Palestine": draft resolution A/52/L.49, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Palestinian People", draft resolution A/52/L.50, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", and draft resolution A/52/L.51, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine". I would also like to announce that Bahrain and the Comoros have joined as sponsors of those three draft resolutions.

97-86722 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Draft resolutions A/52/L.49, A/52/L.50 and A/52/L.51 respectively renew the mandates of the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information to continue their endeavours and programmes in their respective areas of activity. The mandates of those entities have been consistently reconfirmed by the General Assembly by overwhelming majority votes. This is clear testimony to the fact that the Assembly considers them vital to the overall efforts of our Organization to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. Also, this year again, many delegations in their statements in plenary meetings reiterated the clear position of the entire international community that the United Nations should continue to have a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects.

The sponsors are submitting these three draft resolutions driven by a strong desire that the Organization should make a further concrete and constructive contribution to the multiplicity of efforts — bilateral, multilateral or undertaken by individuals or by Governments — aimed at bringing about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

As members of the Assembly can see, the texts of the three draft resolutions have been updated as necessary to reflect the changes in the work programmes of the Committee and of the Secretariat's Division for Palestinian Rights and Department of Public Information. The corresponding financial provision has been made in the programme budget for 1998-1999.

Allow me, on behalf of the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to express profound gratitude to all those Members that have through the years supported the work done by the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information in implementation of their important mandates. I would also like to call upon all delegations present here to express their support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people by voting in favour of the draft resolutions before the Assembly.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/52/L.49, A/52/L.50 and A/52/L.51. Before giving the floor to the representative who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the voting, let me remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): In the interest of time, I would like to give one explanation of vote that addresses all five draft resolutions under agenda item 36, "Question of Palestine". My Government opposes them all. These draft resolutions are remnants of an earlier time overtaken by events in the Middle East. Three of these draft resolutions promote institutions whose activities and approaches to Middle East peace are unbalanced and outdated. They do nothing to support the process of negotiation now underway directly between the parties concerned, and they scarcely take note of the considerable achievements of the negotiating partners to date.

What these draft resolutions do instead is drain away millions of dollars each year in precious financial and human resources that could better serve the cause of economic development in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The international community has clearly stated its support for assisting the Palestinians in building needed self-government institutions, economic infrastructure and social services. We believe the General Assembly should consider carefully whether the activities supported by these draft resolutions represent the most effective use of United Nations resources in support of these objectives.

What this money does instead is underwrite reports few people read and produce resolutions, like these, that hurt, not help, the peace process. In a reform-minded era in which every dollar counts, these resources should be transferred from these committees and activities to other United Nations organizations — such as the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East or the United Nations Development Programme — that would carry out programmes directly benefitting the Palestinian people.

Draft resolution A/52/L.52, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", injects the General Assembly into questions that are the subject of direct negotiation between the parties. That is, in our view, inappropriate and unhelpful. At this sensitive moment, we want to support that process of negotiation rather than focus on issues or statements that divide and polarize.

My Government would also like to state its strong opposition to the new draft resolution offered by the Arab

group in document A/52/L.53, which would upgrade the status of the Palestinian Observer Mission. If approved, this draft resolution would grant to the Palestinian Mission all rights of Member States except the right to vote and the right to put forward candidates for election to United Nations bodies. The Palestinians would then have rights exceeding those of Observer States. This draft resolution, if adopted, would set a provocative precedent that will not be easy to walk away from and will affect the conduct of United Nations business for years to come.

We oppose this proposal on three grounds. First, the Palestinians are not a State and should not have rights in the General Assembly nearly equal to those of States. This has been a long-standing principle of membership in the General Assembly, and we see no reason to amend it now. This is especially true since the ultimate disposition of the West Bank and Gaza is very much a permanent-status issue which the Palestinians themselves have agreed in the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements to resolve in the context of direct negotiations with Israel.

Secondly, we are concerned that this proposal could have negative consequences for extremely sensitive diplomatic efforts to inject new momentum into the peace process. This is not the time to take precipitate actions that might appear merely symbolic to those in this Hall but that could have very real and very negative repercussions for the negotiations now going on.

Thirdly, this move, if successful, would likely encourage other groups involved in other regional political disputes to attempt similar status upgrades in the United Nations and its associated bodies, with chaotic political consequences for those organizations. I am sure that the members of the General Assembly can appreciate the implications for their own regions should this occur.

The United States strongly supports the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. To our regret, the unbalanced draft resolutions before us complicate the achievement of that objective. We will vote against these five draft resolutions and we invite others to do the same.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolutions contained in documents A/52/L.49, A/52/L.50 and A/52/L.51.

We turn first to draft resolution A/52/L.49, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People". A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, the former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The draft resolution was adopted by 115 votes to 2, with 45 abstentions (resolution 52/49).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Latvia informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The President: We turn now to draft resolution A/52/L.50, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi 3Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The draft resolution was adopted by 113 votes to 2, with 47 abstentions (resolution 52/50).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Latvia informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The President: We turn next to draft resolution A/52/L.51, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine" of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua

New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Bulgaria, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Rwanda

The draft resolution was adopted by 158 votes to 2, with 4 abstentions (resolution 52/51).

The President: Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote after the vote on draft resolutions A/52/L.49, L.50 and L.51, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Yousefi (Islamic Republic of Iran) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation has voted in favour of the draft resolutions on the question of Palestine. However, my delegation would like clearly to express its reservation on any parts of these instruments that may imply recognition of Israel.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the European Union to explain our vote on the draft resolutions on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat.

In spite of some real difficulties, important progress has been achieved in recent years towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The European Union, therefore, regrets that the mandates of these two departments dealing with the question of Palestine within the United Nations do not take better account of the spirit of the peace process, which is why the member States of the European Union, as in the past, abstained in the vote on draft resolutions A/52/L.49 and L.50.

The European Union, however, welcomes the dialogue that was established in recent months with the Bureau of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We intend to continue this exchange of views, particularly with a view to adapting the Committee's activities and mandate to the new situation that obtains in the Middle East, so that the latter may make a constructive contribution to United Nations action in support of the peace efforts in the region.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): In an effort to explain the position taken by my delegation, I would like to start with A/52/L.51. My delegation voted in favour of this draft resolution because the information which should flow, as advocated by this draft, is necessary for Member States to know what obtains in the Middle East.

We abstained on draft resolutions L.49 and L.50 because the delegation of Swaziland believes that we should all be committed to persuading the parties to negotiate. My delegation supports the current mission of the United States Secretary of State — that of requesting all parties in the dispute to rekindle the spirit of negotiations. If, therefore, we abstain, we are saying what is happening now, while not supporting the effort. In other words, we are tracing the truth because we know the truth. The truth is that all parties should talk.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote.

The General Assembly will now turn to draft resolution A/52/L.52 and Corrigendum 1.

I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution L.52 and Corr.1.

Mr. Donokusumo (Indonesia): On behalf of the sponsors, which include Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Comoros, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Guinea, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen and my own country, Indonesia, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", as contained in document A/52/L.52.

As noted in the preamble of this draft, 1997 marks 50 years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 30 years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. In the first and second preambular paragraphs, the General Assembly would recall its relevant resolutions, including those of the tenth emergency special session, as well as relevant Security Council resolutions.

The preamble of this draft also indicates, *inter alia*, that the Assembly is aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem.

The last preambular paragraph expresses the Assembly's concern about the serious difficulties facing the Middle East peace process, including the lack of implementation of the agreements reached and the deterioration of the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people as a result of the Israeli positions and measures.

In operative paragraph 1 of the draft, the General Assembly would reaffirm the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects. The Assembly would also express its full support for the ongoing peace process, which began in Madrid, and for the 1993 Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

In operative paragraph 3, the General Assembly would stress the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East peace process, and the need for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, including the redeployment of the Israeli forces from the West Bank and the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement.

Operative paragraph 4 calls upon the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and other interested parties, as well as the entire international community, to exert all the necessary efforts and initiatives to bring the peace process back on track and to ensure its continuity and success.

In operative paragraph 5, the Assembly would stress the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, and for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. This draft also stresses the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

Operative paragraph 7 urges Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period. In paragraph 8, the Assembly would emphasize the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

Finally, the last operative paragraph requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/52/L.52 and corrigendum 1.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote before the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Hizlan (Turkey): Although Turkey supports draft resolution A/52/L.52, we see that it does not reflect all the obstacles on the road to lasting peace and stability in the Middle East. We believe that terrorism is one of the fundamental threats to the peace process. We would like to emphasize, therefore, the urgent need for countries which lend their support to terrorism to desist from this illegal and destructive practice and refrain from using terrorism as foreign-policy leverage.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): My delegation had intended to give an explanation of vote after the voting, but because of a certain slur, which we would like to stress here, we decided to give our explanation of vote before the voting.

Draft resolution A/52/L.52 is in our view a good draft resolution. It is persuasive, and embodies the principle of persuasive diplomacy which the United Nations and all its partners should continue to advocate. In particular, it refers, in operative paragraph 2, to the agreements reached at Madrid. This is what we should seek to achieve today: to remind our friends on the question of the Middle East that they should lay down the arms of war, and should talk and fulfil their obligations. For this reason, I feel that this draft resolution is less harmful to anybody, because it is talking the language of renegotiation.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.52 and corrigendum 1, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Bulgaria, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of)

The draft resolution was adopted by 155 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions (resolution 52/52).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.52, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". The fact that we voted in favour of the resolution just been adopted does not mean that we either support or oppose the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel and referred to in the tenth and eleventh preambular paragraphs and operative paragraph 2 of the resolution.

Regarding the ninth preambular paragraph, we would like to stress once again that the complete withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace, in accordance with the principles and the mandate of the Madrid Conference and the principle of land for peace, is the only way to enable the people of the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/52/L.52, because it feels that the solution to the question of Palestine is an indispensable element in the settlement of the Middle East conflict.

However, I would like to make the following statement regarding the content of operative paragraph 3.

Mexico takes note that one of the basic principles of the peace process in the Middle East has been the exchange of land for peace. The land-for-peace formula has proven its usefulness in the search for a solution to this particular conflict. However, it would seem risky to make it a universal legal principle, to be applied as a norm in all conflicts.

Beyond that basic principle lies the general principle of international law holding that conquest does not grant territorial rights. We all recognize, as a fundamental norm, that the acquisition of land through the use of force is inadmissible. As a corollary to this universal principle, it must be concluded that the entirety of any territory occupied during an armed conflict must be returned to its legitimate owner without conditions.

For these reasons, the delegation of Mexico reiterates that while we recognize the political value of the basic principle, we feel it would be unsound to raise it to the level of a general principle of international law. Mexico would like to call once again for greater precision in the language used to describe a political understanding that is not, and cannot be, a universal legal principle.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The General Assembly will now consider draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1, and the amendment thereto contained in document A/52/L.59.

I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1.

Mr. Donokusumo (Indonesia): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Full participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations", contained in document A/52/L.53/Rev.1, on behalf of its sponsors, which include Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Comoros, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Guinea, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen.

In the first preambular paragraph, the draft recalls General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, in which the Assembly, *inter alia*, partitioned Palestine into an Arab State and a Jewish State.

In the second preambular paragraph, the draft recalls resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, in which the General Assembly granted observer status to the Palestine Liberation Organization. That resolution was the first in a series of General Assembly resolutions dealing with the status, rights and privileges of the Palestine Liberation Organization, or, later, Palestine.

The third preambular paragraph recalls the second such resolution, namely, resolution 43/160 A of 9 December 1988, adopted under the agenda item entitled "Observer status of national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity and/or the League of Arab States". In that resolution, the Assembly decided that the Palestine Liberation Organization, like the South West Africa People's Organization, was entitled to have its communications issued and circulated as official documents of the United Nations. To date, no other observer has enjoyed such a privilege.

In the fourth preambular paragraph, the draft recalls resolution 43/177 of 15 December 1988, in which the Assembly acknowledged the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988 and decided, *inter alia*, that the designation "Palestine" should be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization" in the United Nations system.

In the fifth preambular paragraph, the draft recalls that the Security Council, at its 2041st meeting, on 27 October 1977, decided by a vote that an invitation should be extended to the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the debate on the situation in the Middle East and that that invitation would confer upon it the same rights of participation as those conferred upon a Member State when it is invited to participate in the discussion under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council. That same paragraph also recalls that the invitation has been repeated on numerous occasions and that, since February 1994, Palestine has been invited to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the established practice.

It is obvious from this preambular paragraph that the participation of Palestine in the Security Council, when invited by the Council, is more advanced than its participation in the General Assembly.

The sixth and seventh preambular paragraphs deal with the status of Palestine in certain bodies. The sixth recalls that Palestine enjoys full membership in the Group

of Asian States of the United Nations and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Palestine is also a full member of the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Group of 77 and China, as stated in the seventh preambular paragraph.

In the eighth preambular paragraph, the Assembly expresses its awareness that general democratic Palestinian elections were held on 20 January 1996 and that the Palestinian Authority was established on part of the occupied Palestinian territory.

In the ninth and last preambular paragraph the Assembly would make it clear that it is driven by a desire to contribute to the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, thus achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

After all the facts are mentioned in the preambular part, the operative part of the draft resolution is concise.

I should like to make an oral revision to operative paragraph 1. The words "the same" at the end of the first and beginning of the second lines should be replaced with the word "similar". In operative paragraph 1, therefore, the Assembly would decide to confer upon Palestine, in its capacity as observer, similar rights and privileges of participation as those conferred upon Member States, with the exception of voting and candidature, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and the international conferences convened under the auspices of the Assembly or other organs of the United Nations as well as in United Nations conferences.

In operative paragraph 2, the Assembly would authorize the Secretariat of the United Nations to implement the provisions of the present resolution and request the Secretary-General to proceed expeditiously in this regard.

Let me make it clear that this draft resolution does not seek full membership or balloting in the United Nations. The draft resolution, however, does seek additional rights and privileges to be conferred upon Palestine and, as a practical way to do that, the text confers on Palestine, in its capacity as observer, rights and privileges of participation similar to those conferred upon Member States, with the exception of voting and candidature.

We believe that the draft resolution produces useful and practical results concerning the participation of Palestine in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and the international conferences convened under the auspices of the Assembly or other organs of the United Nations as well as in United Nations conferences. We expect this to include, but not be limited to, participation in the general debate of the General Assembly, normal inscription in the list of speakers under all agenda items, whether in plenary meetings or in the Main Committees, the right of reply, the right to raise points of order and new seating arrangements, as well as new listings and other issues of protocol and internal arrangements.

On behalf of the sponsors, allow me to thank all those Member States that contributed to the extensive consultations that took place to reach broad agreement on the present draft resolution.

As the draft resolution says, we expect that its adoption will contribute to the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, thus achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The Palestinian people deserve the Assembly's support, and we hope that the draft resolution, as orally revised, will be adopted by a large majority.

The President: I now call upon the representative of Luxembourg to introduce document A/52/L.59.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union to introduce an amendment to draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1, as orally revised by the representative of Indonesia, entitled "Full participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations".

The European Union has traditionally shown a great deal of sympathy for the Palestinian cause, as it recently demonstrated in the course of the emergency special session of the General Assembly. The European Union understands the desire of the Observer of Palestine to improve and facilitate his daily working conditions in order to enable him to participate as fully as possible in the work of our Organization.

As introduced today by Indonesia, however, the draft resolution goes well beyond a practical improvement in the participation of the Observer of Palestine in the work of the General Assembly and other United Nations organs. It raises questions of principle which relate, *inter alia*, to the draft resolution's implications not only for the precise status of Palestine in

the United Nations but also for the relationship between States Members and Observers.

The European Union is prepared to participate in such a discussion here in the Assembly, but we believe that it must be properly prepared so that we may all take a well-considered decision in full awareness of all the facts and after an in-depth exchange of views.

The European Union therefore proposes that we take a decision of principle with regard to a review of the rights and privileges that the Observer of Palestine currently enjoys and that we request the Secretary-General to submit, as soon as possible, and before the end of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, the current session, a report that would enable us to take a decision on the issues addressed in the draft resolution. We have reflected this concern in the text of A/52/L.59.

The President: I call upon the representative of Yemen on a point of order.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen): On behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1, "Full participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations", in connection with the amendment just introduced by the representative of Luxembourg, I should like to move a motion pertaining to the voting on amendments.

The last sentence of rule 90 of the rules of procedure reads as follows:

> "A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of the proposal."

The so-called amendment contained in document A/52/L.59 is the complete antithesis of the draft resolution so ably introduced by the representative of Indonesia. Our draft resolution seeks to confer upon Palestine new rights and privileges of participation, while this amendment actually reaffirms the existing rights of Palestine as an observer. In other words, it seeks to perpetuate the status quo of the Palestine delegation.

In addition, the amendment seeks to delete the important body of our draft resolution, contained in its two operative paragraphs. It seeks to delete both and insert paragraphs that have a completely different meaning.

Therefore, this is a new proposal and not an amendment to which rule 90 would apply. I move therefore that the amendment in document A/52/L.59 be considered a new proposal, in accordance with rule 90. In such a case, I suppose, rule 91 would be applicable, by which the voting would begin with the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.53/Rev.1.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): The European Union cannot share the view expressed by the representative of Yemen with respect to the nature of the text contained in document A/52/L.59, which I had the honour of introducing a few moments ago. Indeed, we consider the text of that document clearly to represent an amendment to draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1, for the following reasons.

First, from the subjective point of view, document A/52/L.59 clearly amends draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1. Secondly, from the objective point of view, the structure of draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1 is respected and its preamble maintained in its entirety. Thirdly, the amendment relates to the same subject as that of draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1: the full participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations. It also pursues the same objective: to confer upon Palestine the necessary rights to participate properly in the work of the General Assembly and international conferences convened under United Nations auspices.

The only difference between the two texts is that of the methods selected to achieve that aim. While draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1 would take today a hasty decision of great importance in terms of the principles governing our Organization, the amendment in draft resolution A/52/L.59 would require the decision on the rights of the Observer of Palestine to be taken in a reasoned manner, in conditions of objectivity and transparency, following the submission of a report of the Secretary-General that would inform the General Assembly of the implications of the decisions which it is called upon to take.

Thus, the amendment that we have submitted clearly respects the criteria laid down in the General Assembly's rules of procedure, in particular rule 90, which states that:

> "A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of the proposal".

To conclude, I wish to state that it would not appear to be in keeping with the principle of fair play, which

should govern the deliberations of this body, to endeavour, through a procedural argument, to prevent the General Assembly from taking a decision on the substance of the question addressed by the amendment before us.

The President: We have heard a motion made by the representative of Yemen and a statement by the representative of Luxembourg. From these two interventions, it appears that the views of Member States on this issue are divided.

I therefore propose that the General Assembly take a decision on the proposal by the representative of Yemen that document A/52/L.59 does not constitute an amendment.

I therefore now put to the vote the proposal by the representative of Yemen that document A/52/L.59 does not constitute an amendment. To clarify, a vote in favour will mean that document A/52/L.59 does not constitute an amendment. Am I clear?

Before we proceed to the vote on the motion made by the representative of Yemen, I now give the floor to the representative of Swaziland on a point of order, though I appeal to him not to make me more confused and lost among the rules of procedure.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): I do not have the intention of confusing the presidency, but I would request that, since we are handling matters of delicacy now, the President proceed very slowly and be more enunciative, speaking at dictation speed. This is a matter of delicacy. In fact, if it were not for the rules of procedure, my delegation would say: "Why can't you go and have tea, so that you may rest and we may rest, or even call it a day?" But because we have said what we have said, I am saying: Let us move at a tortoise's speed and proceed very clearly.

The President: I shall repeat what I have said as clearly as possible and at dictating speed.

It appears from the motion made by the representative of Yemen and the statement by the representative of Luxembourg that the views of Member States on this issue are divided. I therefore propose that the General Assembly take a decision on the proposal by the representative of Yemen because, in his statement, he made a reference to a statement in accordance with points of order.

As I informed the Assembly at the beginning, we have discussed with the delegations involved in this issue how we are going to proceed. As members are well aware, the point of order can be taken up at any moment. Therefore, I am very grateful to the representative of Yemen that he followed an agreement we reached before the proceeding that he would ask to speak on a point of order after the representative of Luxembourg introduced his amendment. Am I slow enough? Very good.

We followed this procedure, which was agreed by the Assembly and not to complicate the consideration of this issue, because the main purpose is to facilitate the peace process in the Middle East.

The representative of Yemen raised a point of order in accordance with rule 71. He also made reference to and quoted rule 90. It is therefore not necessary for me to quote that rule. In accordance with rule 71, on points of order, I have to put his proposal to the vote immediately.

I therefore suggest that the General Assembly now take a decision on the proposal by the representative of Yemen that document A/52/L.59 — the Luxembourg amendment — does not constitute an amendment; in other words, that it be interpreted to be a proposal and not an amendment.

Before I put Yemen's proposal to the vote, I would like to clarify that a "yes" vote will mean that document A/52/L.59 does not constitute an amendment.

The General Assembly will now proceed with the voting.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cape Verde, Colombia, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic,

Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela

Abstaining:

Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Kenya, Liberia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Nepal, Peru, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Solomon Islands, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu

The proposal was rejected by 65 votes to 57, with 32 abstentions.

The President: I call on the representative of Egypt on a point of order.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): On behalf of the co-sponsors, I would like to request a 15-minute recess so that they can look at the matter at this stage.

The President: I think that this request meets the rules of procedure. I therefore suspend the meeting for 15 minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 5.50 p.m. and resumed at 6.10 p.m.

The President: I call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): After consultations among the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1, it has been decided that it is appropriate at this stage to request that the draft resolution not be put to the vote. Further consultations will take place on the matter.

I would like on behalf of all the sponsors to thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership and for your understanding, and I would like above all to thank all the States represented here for their patience.

The President: Members have heard the statement of the representative of Egypt on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1, to the effect that the draft resolution should not be put to the vote. I shall take it therefore that the sponsors of the amendment thereto contained in document A/52/L.59 agree not to put that amendment to the vote.

The Assembly will therefore not proceed to take action on draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1 or on the amendment thereto contained in document A/52/L.59.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 36, "Question of Palestine".

Agenda item 37 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/52/467, A/52/581)

Draft resolutions (A/52/L.54, A/52/L.55, A/52/L.62)

Amendments (A/52/L.63)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its debate on agenda item 37 at the 61st plenary meeting, held on 3 December 1997.

I call on the representative of Norway.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): On behalf of the Russian Federation, the United States of America and my own country, Norway — the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.62, entitled "Middle East peace process" — I wish to inform the Assembly that the sponsors have decided to withdraw that draft resolution for the moment. Since similar texts were first adopted by the General Assembly in 1993, these draft resolutions have been an

expression of support for the peace process in the Middle East. In the light of efforts now underway by the sponsors of the peace process and others, with the parties, to inject new momentum into the process, the sponsors are ready to resubmit the draft resolution at a time when we, as well as the parties themselves, believe it will be appropriate and useful again to seek this expression of support for the peace process from the international community.

The President: As draft resolution A/52/L.62 has been withdrawn by its sponsors, I shall take it that the sponsors of the amendments thereto contained in document A/52/L.63 agree also to withdraw those amendments.

The Assembly will therefore not proceed to take action on draft resolution A/52/L.62 or on the amendments thereto contained in document A/52/L.63.

I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/52/L.54 and A/52/L.55.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt is pleased to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.54, entitled "Jerusalem", under agenda item 37, "Situation in the Middle East". I wish to announce that Bahrain and the Comoros have become sponsors of the draft resolution.

The draft resolution on this subject has not changed since last year. It has three preambular paragraphs in the preamble and four operative paragraphs. In the first preambular paragraph, the General Assembly recalls its resolutions on Jerusalem, in particular those from 1981 until last year, all of which confirm that the Israeli practices in Jerusalem are null and void.

The second preambular paragraph recalls Security Council resolution 478 (1980), in which the Council decided not to recognize the "Basic Law" and called upon all Member States which had established diplomatic missions at Jerusalem to withdraw such missions from the Holy City.

Operative paragraph 1 determines that the decision of Israel to impose its laws and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem is illegal and therefore null and void and has no validity whatsoever.

Operative paragraph 2 deplores the transfer by some States of their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem in violation of Security Council resolution 478 (1980), to which I have just referred. In operative paragraph 3, the General Assembly would call once more upon those States to abide by the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with their commitment under the Charter.

Operative paragraph 4, the final one, requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.54 hope that it will enjoy the endorsement of all the States.

The Egyptian delegation this year is pleased to introduce to the General Assembly the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.55, entitled "The Syrian Golan", also presented under the agenda item on the situation in the Middle East.

At the outset, we wish to inform the Assembly that Viet Nam and the Comoros have joined as sponsors of this draft resolution.

In its fourth preambular paragraph, the draft resolution reaffirms the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, in accordance with the international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. The draft resolution also reaffirms the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the occupied Syrian Golan.

Moreover, the preamble refers to the Madrid Peace Conference convened on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and the formula of land for peace. Another preambular paragraph stresses the illegality of the Israeli settlement construction and settler activities in the occupied Syrian Golan.

In operative paragraph 2 the draft resolution reaffirms Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which considered the Israel decision to annex the Golan as null and void and of no validity whatsoever. Operative paragraph 4 determines that the continued occupation of the Syrian Golan and its de facto annexation constitute a stumbling block in the way of achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

In operative paragraph 5 the draft resolution calls upon Israel to resume the talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and to respect the commitments and

undertakings reached during the previous talks. Operative paragraph 6 demands that Israel withdraw from all the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. In the new operative paragraph 7, the draft resolution calls on all the parties concerned, especially the co-sponsors of the peace process, and the entire international community, to exert all the necessary efforts to ensure the resumption of the peace process and its success.

The sponsors of the draft resolution hope that all States will vote in favour of this draft resolution that reflects the international will embodied in the relevant United Nations resolutions in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/52/L.54 and L.55.

I shall first call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting. I would again like to remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Hizlan (Turkey): Although Turkey supports draft resolution A/52/L.55, I would like to clarify the position of my delegation on one aspect of the situation in the Middle East.

There are several reasons for the current impasse in the peace process. We do not think it is fair to assign all responsibility to one of the elements or to one of the countries involved. We need to deal with each of the factors contributing to the existing situation.

In this respect, we wish to emphasize once again that one of the most important obstacles to peace is terrorism. The countries which regrettably lend support and encouragement to terrorism must immediately cease using this inhuman and destructive policy as leverage to advance their foreign-policy interests.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): The co-sponsors of the peace process are working tirelessly to inject renewed momentum into the peace process. Palestinians and Israelis are negotiating the next important steps in their mutual search for peace. To reinvigorate the possibility of a helpful United Nations role in the peace process, we continue to believe that at the appropriate time there should be a positive resolution that would serve to note the progress made by the parties to date, encourage them to continue efforts to reach a just and lasting solution to the problems that divide them and express the strong support of the international community for that process.

We believe that the draft resolution entitled "The Syrian Golan", like others that deal with the long-standing Arab-Israeli dispute, serves only to complicate the achievement of a mutually acceptable outcome. Syria and Israel have committed themselves to a negotiating process to resolve their differences and achieve a lasting peace agreement. The General Assembly can only make this goal more elusive by injecting itself into issues that the parties have agreed will be decided in face-to-face negotiations.

As a co-sponsor of the peace process begun at Madrid, the United States is firmly committed to helping the parties resolve their differences. However, we do not believe that resolutions such as these are conducive to creating an atmosphere of trust and reconciliation that will help this process succeed.

As has been our practice in the past, the United States will abstain on the draft resolution concerning Jerusalem. Jerusalem and its future should be decided through permanent status negotiations, as agreed by the parties in their 13 September 1993 Declaration of Principles. This Assembly should not interject itself into this most complex and emotional issue.

The President: The Assembly will now take decisions on draft resolutions A/52/L.54 and L.55.

We shall turn first to draft resolution A/52/L.54, entitled "Jerusalem". A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea,

Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel

Abstaining:

Costa Rica, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Swaziland, United States of America, Zambia

Draft resolution A/52/L.54 was adopted by 148 votes to 1, with 9 abstentions (resolution 52/53).

The President: Draft resolution A/52/L.55, on the situation in the Middle East is entitled "The Syrian Golan". A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kazakstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zambia

The draft resolution was adopted by 92 votes to 2, with 65 abstentions (resolution 52/53)

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote.

Mr. Yousefi (Islamic Republic of Iran) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation voted in favour of draft resolutions A/52/L.54 and L.55, on the situation in the Middle East. However, my delegation would like to state its reservations with regard to any part of those texts that might imply recognition of Israel.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like briefly to express our deep gratitude to the representatives of Member States in this Assembly that voted in favour of the draft resolution regarding the occupied Syrian Golan. Their support reflects an emphasis on justice and the upholding of resolutions previously adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations.

Mr. Márquez (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Republic of Argentina voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.55, on the Syrian Golan, because we believe that proscribing the acquisition of territory by force and defending the territorial integrity of States, which are fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and of international law, are the key elements of the resolution. Our vote in favour, however, should not be understood to reflect our position on the content of paragraph 6 of the resolution, relating to the line of 4 June 1967.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Ecuador believes it essential to support and encourage the full resumption of the peace process in the Middle East and to contribute as effectively as possible to strengthening the bilateral and multilateral negotiating mechanisms that are developed. Therefore, my delegation voted in favour of the relevant draft resolutions under item 37 of the agenda, on the situation in the Middle East, on the basis of the steadfast principles of Ecuador's foreign policy, some of which are embodied in the resolutions that have just been adopted. These include, principally, the following: first, the fundamental principle that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible, in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter; second, the need not to change the climate of confidence in the peace negotiations and to promote a search for a peaceful and negotiated resolution of the territorial problems among the States without the threat or use of force; third, strict respect for international humanitarian law; fourth, the rejection of terrorism and violence, which mainly affect the civilian population; fifth, respect for the commitments undertaken in the peace process; sixth, the formula of land for peace; and seventh, the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict as the essential goal for strengthening international peace and security, as well as for full cooperation and mutual development.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): The European Union remains deeply dedicated to the peace process, which is the only way to establish lasting security and peace in the region of the Middle East. It is therefore essential to ensure that all aspects of the peace process move forward so that we can overcome the current deadlock.

The European Union continues to support the opening of negotiations between Israel and Lebanon that fully respect the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of that country. In that context, the European Union reiterates the need for the full and complete implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

The European Union would also like to support the resumption of negotiations between Syria and Israel. The Union reaffirms that the occupation by Israel of the Syrian Golan and the imposition of its laws, jurisdiction and administration is illegal. In the past two years the draft resolutions dealing with the Syrian Golan, however, have contained geographic references that prejudge the outcome of the bilateral negotiations that the European Union keenly hopes will take place. That is why the States members of the European Union abstained in the voting on this text, as in similar cases in the past.

This year it was not possible to reach agreement on a text regarding the Middle East peace process. The European Union regrets this. We believe that, despite the serious difficulties which the process has encountered, this resolution, which reflects a very broad international consensus on the basis of the peace process, is more necessary than ever. It is of the greatest importance that the parties to the conflict honour their obligations and the commitments they have undertaken within the framework of the Madrid and Oslo process, and that they regain the spirit of mutual confidence which will allow the Israeli-Arab conflict as a whole to be resolved.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 37.

Agenda item 36

Question of Palestine (*continued*)

Letter from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/52/571)

Letter from Namibia (A/52/704)

The President: With the concurrence of the General Assembly, we now return briefly to agenda item 36, "Question of Palestine".

I would like to inform the Assembly that I have received a letter dated 5 November 1997 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, contained in document A/52/571, and a letter dated 1 December 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia, contained in document A/52/704.

By those two letters, I have been informed of the wish of the Governments of Namibia and South Africa to become members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. As delegations are aware, in accordance with resolution 3376 (XXX), dated 10 November 1975, members of the Committee are appointed by the General Assembly.

The proposal before the General Assembly is for Namibia and South Africa to be added to the membership of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to the enlargement of the membership of that Committee by appointing Namibia and South Africa as members of the Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974, and 43/177, of 15 December 1988, I now call on the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to all the Member States that supported resolution 52/54, on Jerusalem, which has just been adopted. This crucial issue is extremely important to us as Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims, and to the international community as a whole. The massive support for the resolution, and the fact that there was only one vote against it, is of deep significance, and undoubtedly sends the appropriate message to all the parties concerned.

At the same time, I would also like to express our thanks to all the States that supported the resolutions adopted under agenda item 36, "Question of Palestine", particularly the important resolution 52/49, on the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which performs a task of great usefulness with a view to the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. While we thank the Chairman and other members of that Committee, we would also like to welcome South Africa and Namibia, colleagues in our long struggle for freedom, as new members.

We feel the same appreciation with regard to resolution 52/50, on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat of the United Nations, and resolution 52/51, on the Department of Public Information. Allow me to express our sincere thanks to all those international civil servants of the United Nations who work for these two important parts of the Organization.

Another important resolution is that on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, resolution 52/52, which was also adopted by an overwhelming majority, with 155 votes in favour and two against. That resolution included several principled positions adopted by the United Nations over many years.

To us, all of these resolutions are great and positive contributions to the peace process in the Middle East and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The draft resolution entitled "Full participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations", draft resolution A/52/L.53/Rev.1, is also extremely important to us. Certainly we would have wished to see it put to the vote and adopted today. We would like to express our thanks to all the sponsors of that draft resolution and to those who supported it from the start. On the other hand, we also understand the reasons that led some Member States to view the situation from a perspective which differs from ours, in particular with regard to the need for further study of the issue. We are confident that through consultations we will be able to overcome the difficulties and attain broad support for that draft

resolution, which we hope will be submitted to the Assembly again at a future stage.

Finally, I would like to reiterate our thanks and appreciation to all who support the just struggle of the Palestinian people, to all supporters of our inalienable rights and the peace process in the Middle East, and to all who have understood the necessity for all parties to be committed to implementing the agreements that have been reached so far and on the basis already agreed upon.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 36.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.